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ABSTRACT

Although recent classroom research on second language acquisition has begun to focus on student discourse, there are still few studies which examine student questions and their influence in the classroom. Based on multiple observations of four classrooms in an intensive English program, the researchers investigate the factors that work together to shape question/response behavior among adult English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) learners. The coding and analysis of question types shows that in addition to sex, nationality, and proficiency, participation structures and task types greatly influence the quantity and range of communication in the classroom. (Author)

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"So what are you talking about?": The importance of student questions in the ESL classroom

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Although recent classroom research on second language acquisition has begun to focus on student discourse, there are still few studies which examine student questions and their influence in the classroom. Based on multiple observations of four classrooms in an intensive English program, the researchers investigate the factors which work together to shape question/response behavior among adult ESL learners. The coding and analysis of question types shows that in addition to sex, nationality, and proficiency, participation structures and task types greatly influence the quantity and range of communication in the classroom.

Much of previous research on teacher questions in the second language classroom has shown that they do not necessarily provide opportunities for negotiation; however, some research has shown that specific types of questions can promote communication in the classroom (Pica & Long, 1986; Long & Sato, 1983). Few studies have examined student questions and their influence on classroom discourse, specifically on the negotiation of meaning.

The study of student questions is important both to the understanding of classroom discourse and second language acquisition. If it can be shown that some types of questions lead to interaction and negotiation toward meaning, questioning behavior could be an important factor in the process of learning a second language. These findings would be particularly important for the field of ESL because teachers could create an environment which would best promote those student questions which lead to communication.

This study examines classroom questions, with a particular emphasis on student questioning behavior and the factors which influence it. There are five main influencing factors included in the study. Three are related to the students in each

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class: sex, nationality, and proficiency level. Two are concerned with classroom organization and practices: participation structure and task type.

Within the field of classroom discourse, viewing questions and responses as topics of research is not new. For example, Mishler (1975) found that questions contribute substantially to power and authority relationships in first grade classrooms. He proposed the idea of an interrogative unit, or IU, which is a three–part sequence initiated by a question. For example, Mishler described a sample IU as a "question/response/confirmation sequence" in which the person in power (often a teacher) initiated a question, got a response, and confirmed the response in the form of another question. This, in turn, sustained the power hierarchy, giving the "subordinates" (most often students) less control over the conversation, and fewer opportunities to ask their own questions.

In another study concerning questions, Long, Brock,Crookes, Deike, Potter, and Zhang (1984) examined in depth the questioning patterns of teachers, wait–time, and student responses in high school ESL classrooms. In their investigation, several classrooms were studied to determine the main types of questions teachers asked, as well as the influence of teacher question types on the length, complexity and number of student responses. They found that the types of questions teachers asked (open/closed referential, display) affected student responses, but not in as dramatic a way as they had originally hypothesized. Long, et al. found that referential questions can offer more opportunities for language practice in the LEP classroom, which, they argued, may affect second language acquisition.

Whereas Long, et al. (1984) and Mishler (1975) examined teacher questions/student responses exclusively, we examined teacher questions, student questions and student responses. Although some research has focused on student initiation in the classroom (Seliger, 1977), little, if any, research has focused specifically on student questions. Long, et al.'s exploration of the relationship between teacher question type and student response was particularly useful in our analysis. In addition, Mishler's concept of questions as "interrogative units" provided one explanation for why there are so many more teacher questions than student questions.

With regard to sex differences in classroom questioning practices, we discovered little in the literature that specifically addresses this aspect of women's and men's speech. Duff (1986) found that although NNS men asked slightly more questions in her study, NNS women used somewhat longer utterances. Some studies have examined sex differences in terms of classroom participation. Pica, Holliday, Lewis, Berducci, and Newman (1991) have suggested that women and men may

exhibit different patterns of negotiation in same-sex vs. cross-sex dyads: "Results showed that negotiation was significantly greater among same gender dyads for Female NNSs and about equal in both same and cross gender dyads for Male NNSs" (Pica, et al., 1991:357). In addition, Tannen (1991) found that among her native English speaking college students, women who didn't speak often during class discussions tended to participate more in small groups.

Research on sex differences in conversation outside of the classroom context is more abundant. Some have investigated women's speech (Lakoff, 1973; Fishman, 1978), suggesting that women use more tag questions than men. Other studies have suggested that it is powerless people, and not just women, who do this (O'Barr & Atkins, 1980). In addition, several studies have investigated sex differences in terms of amount of talk (Strodtbeck & Mann, 1956; Eakins & Eakins, 1976; Swacker, 1975), demonstrating overall that men talk more than women in specific situations. Finally, Zimmerman and West (1975) found that almost 96% of interruptions in mixed–sex conversations are made by men (in Wolfson, 1989). It seems clear that male and female roles shape communication patterns. However, more research is needed to determine how sex differences affect classroom question/response behavior.

Next, we see nationality as an index of cultural/ethnic background; therefore, we refer to the nationality of the students as a variable in this study. We explore how the cultural backgrounds and expectations of students influence student questioning behavior. Heath (1982) looked at question/response behavior in elementary school, focusing her attention on the cultural mismatch between student and teacher expectations concerning questions in the classroom. Her findings showed that questioning practices in the home culture of students often differed substantially from the typical questioning practices of the "school culture." Heath criticized educators who see the solution to this problem as forcing students to adopt the norms of the "school culture", most often based on white middle-class norms. She proposed a "two–way intervention" which would require teachers to learn about and build on their students' cultural norms, while at the same time introducing the expected norms of the school.

In another study concerning cultural expectations and practices in the classroom, Sato (1982) discovered a relationship between students' ethnic backgrounds and patterns of participation in adult ESL classes. She found that Asian students, in particular, were hindered from participating fully because they felt a stronger need than non–Asian students to obtain permission from the teacher before speaking. Sato attributed the limited participation of Asian students to the mismatch between the norms of their cultures and the norms of the American ESL classroom.

The Asian students did not fully understand when it was appropriate to participate, and the teacher often perceived this misunderstanding as reluctance to participate. This, in turn, induced the teacher to "protect" the Asian students by calling on them less often.

Duff's study (1986) compared the behavior of Japanese and Chinese students in the classroom. She found that Chinese students used longer utterances, took more turns, asked more questions and interrupted more than their Japanese peers.

Proficiency level has also been investigated as a factor influencing amount of student talk in the ESL classroom. Findings suggest that students of higher proficiency may participate more (Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern, & Todesco 1978). Not only do higher proficiency students participate more, they may also participate differently: Brock (1985) and Rulon and McCreary (1986) have found that these students made fewer clarification requests. It has also been suggested that higher proficiency students may get more from input in the classroom (Strong, 1983).

With respect to classroom organization and practices, there have been several studies done on participation structure and task type and how these factors affect classroom talk. For example, some studies have investigated how participation structure (i.e. teacher-fronted vs. small-group work) and task type (i.e. jigsaw, debate) can influence negotiation and interaction in the classroom. Although questions were mentioned in these analyses, questioning behavior was not the primary focus of these studies. Long, Adams, McLean, and Castaños (1976) compared the amount of participation in peer groups with teacher-directed classrooms, and found substantially more interaction during group work. Others (Rulon & McCreary, 1986; Gaies, 1983) have also focused on the role of participation structure in fostering meaningful communication in the classroom and have confirmed the positive benefits of peer group interaction.

Task type has also been investigated as a variable in ESL classroom practices. Duff (1986) pointed out that different task types and the roles students play in completing them greatly influence turn-taking and language production. In her comparison of interaction during a problem solving task and a debate, she found that nearly twice as many questions were asked during the problem solving task. However, slightly more comprehension checks and clarification requests were asked during the debate. Pica and Doughty (1985) and Doughty and Pica (1986) investigated the difference between *required* and *optional* information exchanges and found that students participate more (and ask more questions) when the task *requires* an exchange of information. In addition, they found that participation structure also influenced interaction, finding that students in small groups interacted more than they

did in teacher-fronted classrooms. Their analysis is of particular importance because they investigated how both participation structure and task type influence classroom communication patterns. Building on their work, we are specifically interested in the ways that participation structure and task type influence student question-response behavior.

The Study

The data for this study came from observations of four ESL classrooms. We observed two intensive English program intermediate level classes; one taught by an African-American male (Classroom 3), and the other by a Caucasian female (Classroom 2). In addition, we observed two advanced classes: one intensive English class taught by a Caucasian female (Classroom 1), and a freshman writing class taught by a Latino male (Classroom 4).[1]

Classroom 1 had 8 men and 2 women (for a total of 10 students), from Japan, Taiwan, Venezuela, and Mali. Classroom 2 had 7 men and 3 women (10 students), from Japan, Korea, Cyprus, Peru and Brazil. Classroom 3 had 3 men and 4 women (7 students), from Japan, Mali, Spain, Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. Classroom 4 had 8 men and 5 women (13 students), from Senegal, Vietnam, China, and Hong Kong.

From the videotapes, audiotapes, and fieldnotes, we transcribed the questions and responses of teachers and students. Due to the complex nature of the classroom as well as the limitations of video and audio equipment, it was impossible to isolate every question and response, particularly during small-group work. As a result, there were some questions we were unable to transcribe fully; these questions were discarded. We were able to collect and analyze a majority of the questions and responses which occurred in the classroom.

The categories employed by Long and Sato (1983) were used to code the different question types. For the purposes of this paper it was necessary to use six of their seven: 1) expressive, 2) display, 3) referential [open/closed], 4) confirmation check, 5) comprehension check, and 6) clarification request. We did not include the seventh type, rhetorical questions, because this type was not represented in our data. In order to establish intercoder reliability, we first looked at a transcript and collaborated in assigning each question to a category. Then, independent categorizing of another section of the transcript and a comparision of the codings was done to see if there were discrepancies. Finally, we categorized the remaining

questions independently, discussing those that did not fit easily into a category. Questions on which we could not agree were discarded.

Because form does not always imply function, it was necessary to pay close attention to the context in which each question was asked, and the response which was given. As a result, we found that many utterances which appeared to be questions actually functioned in other ways (i.e. expressives). Furthermore, some questions had the exact same form, but were placed in different categories (e.g. confirmation checks, clarification requests). In conjunction with the coding of question types, we kept careful records of who asked each question (i.e. teacher, student), the sex and nationality of the speaker, what the participation structure was at that time (e.g. teacher-fronted, small-group), and the type of task which the participants were engaged in (i.e. student-student interviews, audio listening comprehension activity).

In addition to the collection of teacher and student questions/responses, we also collected data from student questionnaires (Appendix) and teacher interviews to gain insights into perceptions concerning the use of questions in the classroom. Finally, we used data collected from student proficiency reports completed by the teachers at the end of each term. We wanted to investigate the connection between English proficiency and questioning behavior and felt that the level in which the student was placed might not accurately reflect the students' proficiency in English.

Findings

An overview of the data shows, not surprisingly, that teachers asked a larger total number of questions than the students (Table 1). Teachers asked a total of 669 questions while students asked 327. The majority of student questions occurred during small-group activities (206 or 63%), while teacher questions were more common during teacher-fronted activities (570 or 85.2%). Teachers also showed a wider range of questions asked; they used questions from all six categories with frequency. Students mainly used questions from three of the six categories (referential, confirmation check, clarification request). We did not find any student display questions. Instead, students asked closed referential questions (115 or 35.2% of total student questions asked), open referential questions (47 or 14.4%), confirmation checks (107 or 32.7%), clarification requests (53 or 16.2%), expressives (3 or .9%), and comprehension checks (2 or .6%). Only 29 of the 40 students in the study asked questions.

Table 1: Question Types

	Classroom 1		Classroom 2		Classroom 3		Classroom 4	
	Teacher	Student	Teacher	Student	Teacher	Student	Teacher	Student
Expressive								
teacher-fronted	5	1	18	1	20	0	9	0
small-group	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0
Display								
teacher-fronted	11	0	34	0	22	0	3	0
small-group	3	0	1	0	4	0	0	0
O. Referential								
teacher-fronted	52	5	18	0	28	0	29	5
small-group	9	15	4	19	13	3	0	0
C. Referential								
teacher-fronted	53	23	14	8	24	5	37	14
small-group	17	27	6	35	13	3	0	0
Comp. Check								
teacher-fronted	6	0	31	0	27	0	9	0
small-group	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Conf. Check								
teacher-fronted	23	10	19	15	21	8	34	10
small-group	2	37	1	21	16	6	0	0
Clarification								
teacher-fronted	10	4	7	1	1	2	5	9
small-group	0	24	0	10	7	3	0	0
TOTAL	191	147	153	112	199	30	126	38

Furthermore, contrary to previous research (Early, 1985; Long & Sato, 1983; Pica & Long, 1986) which reported comprehension checks as the most common teacher question type, we found very few (only 73 or 10.9% of total teacher questions asked). One teacher was quite surprised that she had not asked any comprehension checks, because she thought she used them frequently. We were also surprised by the relatively low percentage of teacher display questions in the data, as these are often cited as a common teacher question type (Long & Sato, 1983). Teachers asked closed referential questions (164 or 24.5%), open referential questions (153 or 22.9%),

confirmation checks (116 or 17.3%), clarification requests (30 or 4.5%), expressives (55 or 8.2%), and displays (78 or 11.7%).

Sex

Based on previous research we expected to find significant differences where sex was concerned. We expected that men would ask more questions than women and that men and women would ask different types of questions. The teachers had differing opinions concerning sex and questioning practices in the classroom. All of the teachers expressed the belief that the sex of a student has some influence on question behavior, but only one thought that sex was particularly influential. Our data shows that the 20 men and 20 women in the study asked different amounts of questions depending on the participation structure: men asked more questions than women during teacher-fronted activities and women asked more questions than men during small-group activities. In fact, in one class (Classroom 2), women didn't ask any questions at all during the teacher-fronted activities. Furthermore, in this class there were only three women, which may indicate that in classes where there are fewer women than men, women ask less questions. In two other classrooms, where there was a larger number of women than men, women asked more questions. Overall, it is interesting to note that male students asked twice as many closed referential questions, and women used somewhat more clarification requests (Table 2).

Table 2: Question Type and Sex*

	Men	Women
Expressive	2	0
Display	0	0
Open Referential	23	24
Closed Referential	75	40
Comprehension Check	2	0
Confirmation Check	54	54
Clarification Request	32	21
Total	188	139

*Observation 1, 20 men/20 women; Observation 2, 20 men/16 women

Nationality

We also believed that nationality would be a major variable in terms of questioning behavior in the classroom: we thought that people from some countries would ask different amounts and types of questions than those from others. It was also thought that there might be a mismatch of assumptions brought to the classroom by the teachers and students. We did not find substantial support for any of these

assumptions, but we did find some data which indicates that nationality could affect question behavior. For example, supporting what two of the teachers stated, some of our findings showed that Japanese and Korean women tend to ask fewer questions than women of other cultures during teacher-fronted activities (Table 3).

Table 3: Question Types by Nationality

	Expressive	Display	Open Referential	Closed Referntial	Comp. Check	Conf. Check	Clar. Request
Japan (9)	1	0	5	22	0	26	6
Korea (5)	1	0	13	21	2	22	7
Taiwan (4)	0	0	10	14	0	19	10
S. Am. (3)	0	0	8	26	0	21	6
Viet. (2)	0	0	3	4	0	5	3
Africa (2)	1	0	3	14	0	11	16
China (2)	0	0	6	18	0	12	5
H. K. (1)	0	0	2	6	0	3	2
Spain (1)	0	0	0	1	0	4	0
USSR (1)	0	0	0	1	0	0	1

In addition, we found evidence which contradicted our beliefs that teachers and students have different assumptions about what student questioning behavior should be in the classroom. All of the teachers and 91% of the students surveyed agreed that students should ask questions in class. However, in terms of behavior, many students did not ask questions in class. We found that there were many students who reported similar questioning behavior in their own country and in the United States. These students tended to accurately describe their questioning behavior. However, there were many other students who inaccurately described their behavior, asking fewer questions than they reported they did. Furthermore, many of these students reported asking few questions in classrooms in their home country. Many of these ESL students believed that they should adjust their behavior to meet the norms of the American classroom and/or thought that they adjusted their norms, but in reality did not.

Student Proficiency Level

Another factor influencing student questions is the English proficiency level of the students within a classroom. We organized this study in such a way that we could compare the questioning behavior of intermediate and advanced students in the program to see if differences in language proficiency seemed to influence questioning behavior. We found, however, that there was no obvious correlation between level and questioning behavior: Classroom 1 (advanced) and Classroom 2 (intermediate) had a

higher number of student questions than Classroom 3 (intermediate) or Classroom 4 (advanced) (Table 1).

Because individual student proficiency varies within classrooms of a particular level, we decided to look at other measures. Upon examining teacher reports on student proficiency and performance, we made two interesting discoveries. First, proficiency level did not seem to effect the number of questions students asked, but rather the *types* of questions they asked. The students who had a lower proficiency as reported by the teachers asked more confirmation checks and clarification requests, thus confirming earlier findings (Brock, 1985; Rulon & McCreary, 1986). Second, students who asked more questions did not necessarily receive a higher performance evaluation than others and vice versa, even though teachers reported that it was desirable for students to ask questions. In fact, one writing teacher explained that her best writers asked very few questions. In addition, the teachers we interviewed felt that student questions were important for a variety of reasons: 1) they serve as signals to teachers about the level of students' understanding; 2) they enable students to check their understanding; and, 3) they allow students to direct their learning.

Participation Structures

We found two main types of participation structures in these classrooms: teacher-fronted and small-group. Classrooms varied in the amount of time spent within each participation structure (Table 4). In addition to influencing who asked questions, these structures also seemed to greatly influence the number of questions asked (Table 1). In the teacher-fronted activities, students asked far fewer questions than during small-group work (18.6% of student questions were asked during teacher-fronted activities as opposed to 81.4% during small-group activities).

Table 4: Classtime and Participant Structures

Observation 1

	Classroom 1	Classroom 2	Classroom 3	Classroom 4
Teacher-fronted	25 min.	45 min	35 min	45 min
Small-group	65 min	35 min	40 min	0 min

Observation 2

	Classroom 1	Classroom 2	Classroom 3	Classroom 4
Teacher-fronted	81 min	65 min	55 min	40 min
Small-group	5 min	25 min	25 min	0 min

In addition, we found overall that students asked far more open referential questions, confirmation checks and clarification requests during small-group activities than during teacher-fronted activities. For example, this selection from an advanced writing class (Classroom 1) shows the use of clarification requests and confirmation checks in small-group work.

Student 1	Student 2
Easy reading? You mean that?	*Yeah*
Wait a minute, you mean easy reading, or you means reading?	*Whatever you want.*
Please, what did you say? It's your opinion so what did you say?	*I say reading.*
So what do you mean?	*Somebody reading.*
Read a lot, right?	*Yeah.*
So this is a quality of a good writer?	*Yeah*

Extended negotiation of meaning of this type was found only during small-group work. This example further supports the notion that confirmation checks and clarification requests serve as "indicators of interaction" (Chaudron, 1988:131), promote communication, and potentially enhance acquisition. This is not to say that all small-group structures promote student questions. In one case the teacher moved from group to group and when present asked most of the questions (Classroom 3). Therefore, it is important for teachers to be aware of their influence on small-group work so that activities which are meant to be student directed do not become teacher-fronted, thus inhibiting student questions.

Task Type

A factor related to participation structure is task type. It is important to see the connection between these two factors because they are often covariables and can both influence opportunities for communication in the classroom. We cannot assume that a particular task type or participation structure will always generate student questions. For example, in one class (Classroom 3), the teacher placed the students in groups and had them report on their answers to two questions. Although one might expect much student-student negotiation and interaction in this context, our findings do not support this assumption, as the following excerpt shows.

Teacher	Student
Eva, how about you/	*I thought it would be rich.*
Have you been to many places besides Philadelphia?	*Just a little bit.*
When you say rich, do you mean that you thought everyone would be rich?	*Uh huh.*
So there were no poor people?	*Uh huh.*
OK, I understand. How about something else people thought?	

Although the participation structure might lead one to expect many student questions, the task type did not require the students to negotiate meaning or seek information: two authentic reasons for asking questions. That is to say, although the students were arranged in small groups, the task was such that the students reported information in response to teacher questions. They therefore did not have the opportunity or the need to ask questions of their own.

Task type does appear to significantly affect the number and type of questions asked. For example, in Classroom 1, a task was to complete a questionnaire as a group:

S3: *(reads question from paper) What qualities does a good writer have?*
S2: *Clear, clear thinking.*
S3: *Clear thinking. Clear thinking, what? Uh, and grammar, knowledge.*
S2: *Yeah, something like that.*
S3: *Something like that.*
S2: *(laughs) You are so clever, you can think about that.*
S3: *Oh. Thank you very much (Ss laugh).*
S2: *You're welcome.*
S3: *Grammar, knowledge. I dunno, uh, knowledge...*
S2: *Asako just mentioned about logical.*
S1: *Logical.*
S3: *Logical?*
S1: *Logical.*
S2: *Is this the same as clear thinking?*
S3: *Yeah, uh, ask Ms. B. Ms. B., is logical the same thing as, uh, what?*
S1 & S2: *Clear thinking.*
S3: *Clear thinking?*
T: *Clear thinking and logical thinking. They're extremely similar.*
S3: *Similar?*
T: *Similar, yeah.*

In this example, the teacher acted as a resource as the students attempted to communicate their opinions concerning good or bad writing. This activity created a fairly equal distribution of referential questions, confirmation checks and clarification requests among the students as a whole. Furthermore, this activity generated a larger number of clarification requests and confirmation checks than did any of the other tasks.

In another of the classes we observed (Classroom 2), students were placed in two groups. In each group, one student (S2) played a character from the text, and the other students interviewed him/her.

S1- How old are you?
S2- Forty-five.
S3- Why do you come here?
S2- Me?
S3- How old is your son?
S2- My son is sixteen.
S3- Is he a high school student? Is there any problem with your son study?
S2- I want him to be a white collar worker, like maybe a doctor or lawyer...
S4- You change when you come here?
S5- You have the same.... you have a house, a car, you have the same thing?
S3- You were a translator. His job was a translator (to group).
S2- I am worrying about my son so I go to America.
S3- Where you live here?
S2- In New York.

We found that in this class, there were far more student-asked referential questions than clarification requests and confirmation checks (Table 5).

Discussion

Our findings support the role of confirmation checks, comprehension checks, and clarification requests in the negotiation of meaning (Long & Sato, 1983; Pica & Long, 1986). If this kind of negotiation is an aid in acquisition, it is encouraging to see that these question types made up approximately 49.5 % of student questions and approximately 32.7% of teacher questions.

Our findings also suggest that teachers play an important role in creating classroom environments that are conducive to student questions. We believe that although it is important for teachers to understand the affect of their students' sex, nationality and proficiency on their questioning behavior, it is just as important to have a clear understanding of how task type and participation structure affect questioning

Table 5: Task and Student Question Type

	Expres.	Display	O. Ref.	C. Ref.	Comp. Check	Conf. Check	Clar. Request	Total
S-S Interview 40 min	0	0	14	32	1	14	9	70
Group Quest. 65 min	0	0	14	27	0	37	24	102
Audio Listening Compre 115 min..	0	0	0	9	0	14	2	25
S-S Report. 40 min	0	0	3	2	0	5	3	13
S-T Report. 45 min	0	0	5	5	0	5	5	20
Teacher-led Disc. 80 min	0	0	3	15	0	7	1	26
S-T Conf. 65 min.	1	0	2	16	0	4	7	30
S-S Role Play 20 min	1	0	0	0	0	4	0	5
Info. Exchang 25 min	0	0	6	3	1	7	2	19

behavior. These are factors which the teacher can control, thereby enabling their students to participate more in the classroom.

In addition, we found that particular combinations of factors influence each other in affecting questioning behavior. For example, it was often difficult to examine participation structure without taking task type into consideration. This became evident as we saw "group work" generating different types and amounts of questions based on the task. In Classroom 1, students were placed in a group activity which necessitated student clarification requests and confirmation checks, whereas in Classroom 2, the group activity generated student referential questions, and in Classroom 3, the small-group activity included only a few student questions.

Futhermore, it may be possible that there is a hierarchy such that some factors are more important than others. For example, our data indicated a tendency for Japanese and Korean women to ask more questions in small groups than in teacher-

fronted participation structures. Here, sex, nationality, and participation structure all seem to influence question/response behavior, but the relative importance of the factors is not evident.

In conclusion, student questions are important to study not only because of the lack of research on their role in classroom discourse, but also because of their potential in promoting negotiation and interaction, and possibly enhancing language acquisition. We began this project assuming that we would limit our study to sex and nationality; however, we found that there were additional factors that needed to be considered in our examination of student questions. Future research should investigate how sex, nationality, proficiency, task type and participation stucture all interact to influence students' communication in the ESL classroom.[2]

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[1] In this intensive English program, there are five levels, with "1" indicating beginning level and "5" indicating the most advanced level. Students are placed according to performance on an oral interview and a holistic writing test. There are also freshman-level composition courses for non-native speakers. Students are also placed in these courses based on a holistic writing sample. For this study, we collected data from two Level 3 classes (intermediate), one Level 5 class (advanced), and one NNS freshman composition class (advanced).

[2] A version of this paper was presented at Penn TESOL East Fall Conference, October 31, 1992 at West Chester University, PA.

Appendix
Questionnaire

Name: Level:

Age: Teacher:

Country of Origin: Gender:

Languages Spoken:

How long have you been in this country:

1. In the American ESL classroom, how often do you ask questions? (Circle one)
   never hardly ever sometimes often very often

2. In the American ESL classroom, how often does your teacher ask questions?
   never hardly ever sometimes often very often

3. In a classroom in your country, how often do you ask questions?
   never hardly ever sometimes often very often

4. In a classroom in your country, how often does a teacher ask questions?
   never hardly ever sometimes often very often

5. Do you think students should ask questions in class? Why or why not?

6. Do you think a teacher should ask questions in a class? Why or why not?

7. Do you think it is a good idea for teachers to call on students by name during class? Why or why not?

8. During class, what do you do when you don't understand something?

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